

Appendix for:
Authoritarian Public Opinion and the Democratic Peace

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1 Survey text

This section provides the text used in the survey experiment, translated into English. Experimental manipulations are contained in brackets [].

Screen 1

There is much concern these days about the spread of nuclear weapons. We are going to describe a situation China could face in the future. For scientific validity the situation is general, and is not about a specific country in the news today. Some parts of the description may strike you as important; other parts may seem unimportant. Please read the details very carefully. After describing the situation, we will ask your opinion about a policy option.

Screen 2

Here is the situation:

- A country is developing nuclear weapons and will have its first nuclear bomb within six months. The country could then use its missiles to launch nuclear attacks against any country in the world, including China. China's national security would be affected.
- The country [has/has not] signed a military alliance with China.
- The country [has/does not have] high levels of trade with China.
- The country [is/is not] a democracy and shows [every sign that it will remain/no sign of becoming] a democracy.
- The country's nonnuclear military forces are half as strong as Chinese nonnuclear forces.
- The country's motives remain unclear, but if it builds nuclear weapons, it will have the power to blackmail or destroy other countries.
- The country has refused all requests to stop its nuclear weapons program.

Screen 3

China and other countries are considering policy options to address the problem. One option is to attack the country's nuclear development sites. If we attack the country's nuclear development sites now, we could prevent the country from making any nuclear weapons.

Would you favor or oppose the Chinese military participating in an attack on the country's nuclear development sites?

- 1 = Favor strongly
- 2 = Favor somewhat
- 3 = Neither favor nor oppose
- 4 = Oppose somewhat
- 5 = Oppose strongly

Screen 4

Please tell us briefly why you favor/oppose the proposal.

2 Treatment effects of alliances and trade

Figure 1 shows the treatment effects of democracy alongside the treatment effects of the alliance and trade variables. As can be seen, the effect of democracy is similar in size and significance to the effect of the target being an ally of China, and much larger than the effect of trade. These results are similar to those reported in Tomz and Weeks (2013).

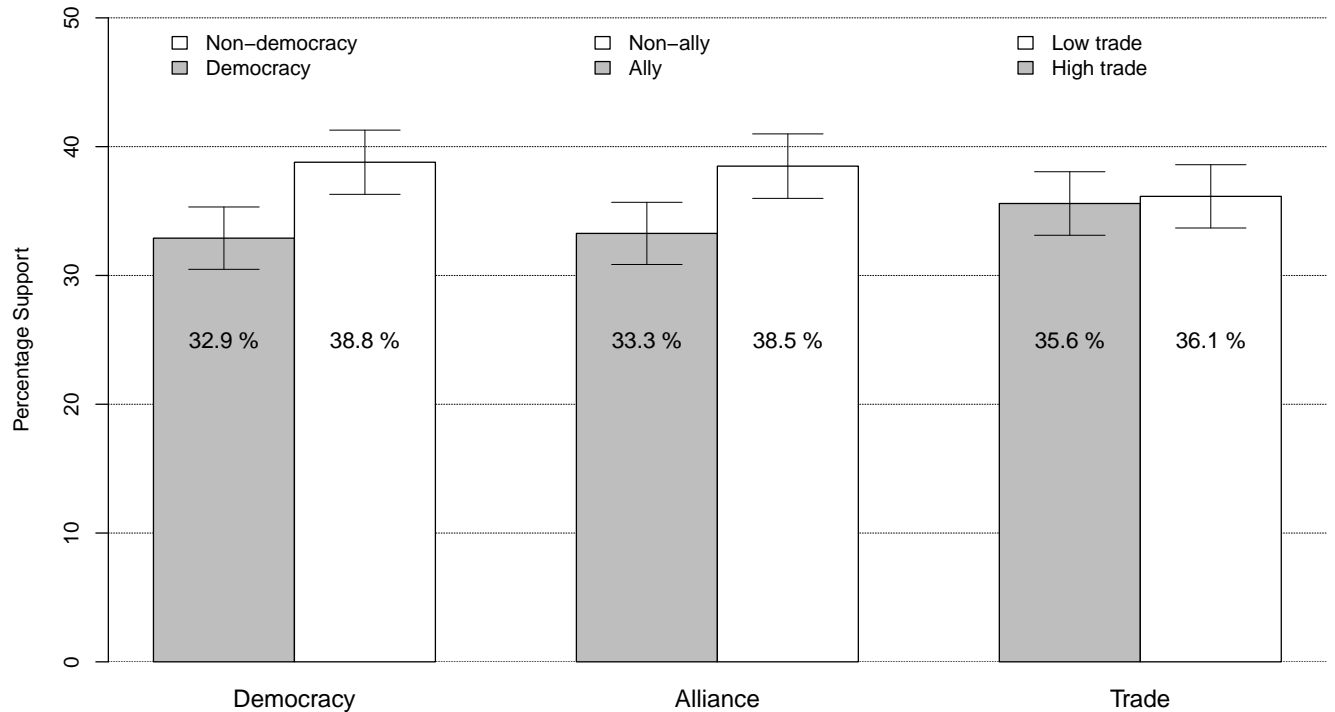


Figure 1: Support for participating in military strike scenarios (a) in which the target is democratic or non-democratic; (b) in which the target is an ally or non-ally of China; and (c) in which the target has high levels of trade with China or not. Bars indicate 95% confidence intervals.

The finding that trade does not have a significant effect on the willingness of publics to take military action is particularly interesting, and may have implications for the literature on the “capitalist peace.”¹ In particular, to the extent that the theoretical argument underpinning the claim that nations that trade with each other are less likely to engage in conflict with one another draws on the preferences of mass publics (and certainly, this is not the only theoretical mechanism that might underpin an empirical finding of a “capitalist peace”), these findings might cast doubt on public opinion as a mechanism underpinning such state behaviors. Just as public opinion could not provide an explanation for the democratic peace if mass publics were not less inclined to attack democracies than non-democracies, public opinion might not provide a persuasive explanation for a “capitalist peace” if mass publics are not less inclined to attack trading partners than non-trading partners.

1. We thank an anonymous reviewer for alerting us to this possibility.

3 Sample characteristics compared to 2010 National Census

Table 1 shows the demographic characteristics of our sample, compared to those of the 2010 National Census. Although there are inevitably some differences between the sample obtained and the National Census targets (especially in a country such as China in which conducting surveys is challenging), our sample does a good job in capturing a broad swath of the Chinese public, and is in line with other national surveys conducted in China.

Table 1: Socio-Demographic Characteristics

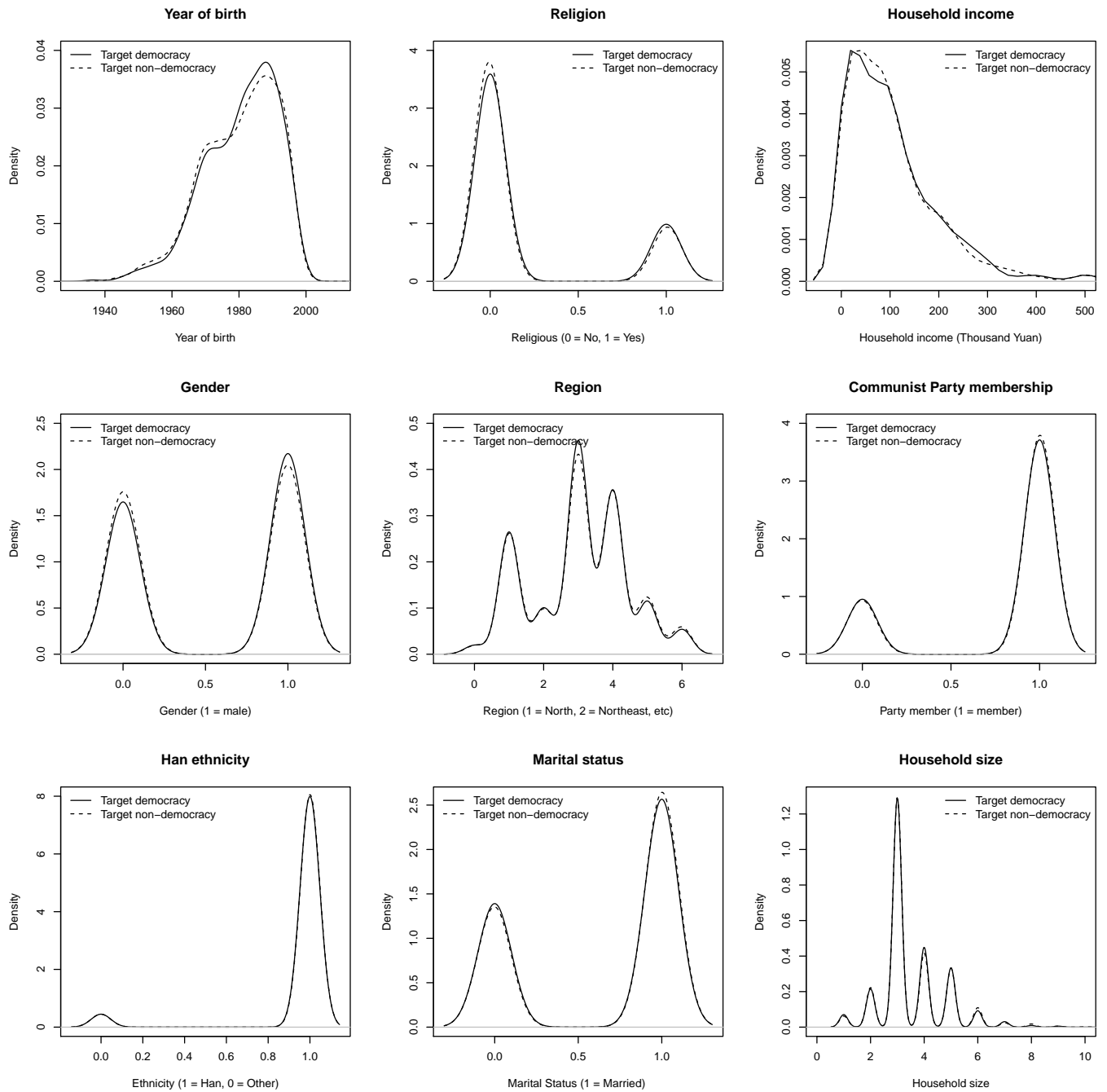
		2010 National Census (adults only)	Sample
Sex	Female	49.48 %	45.70 %
Region	Northern	12.37 %	19.02 %
	Northeastern	8.22 %	7.05 %
	Eastern	29.48 %	32.31 %
	Central/Southern	28.21 %	25.60 %
	Southwestern	14.48 %	8.56 %
Northwestern	7.25 %	4.07 %	
Income	Ave. Income Per Cap.	¥44,488	¥45,198
Ethnicity	Han	92.28 %	94.71 %

Notes: 1. Adults are aged 18 or above. 2. Data excluding non-adults is unavailable for Region and Income. 3. Income figure is estimated based on the 2014 mean disposable income in Beijing.

4 Balance on pre-treatment covariates

The graphs in Figure 2 below show the univariate distributions of a wide range of pre-treatment covariates among the treatment and control groups in the sample. They demonstrate virtually no imbalance across the treatment and control groups (as would be expected given the large sample size and randomization of the treatment).

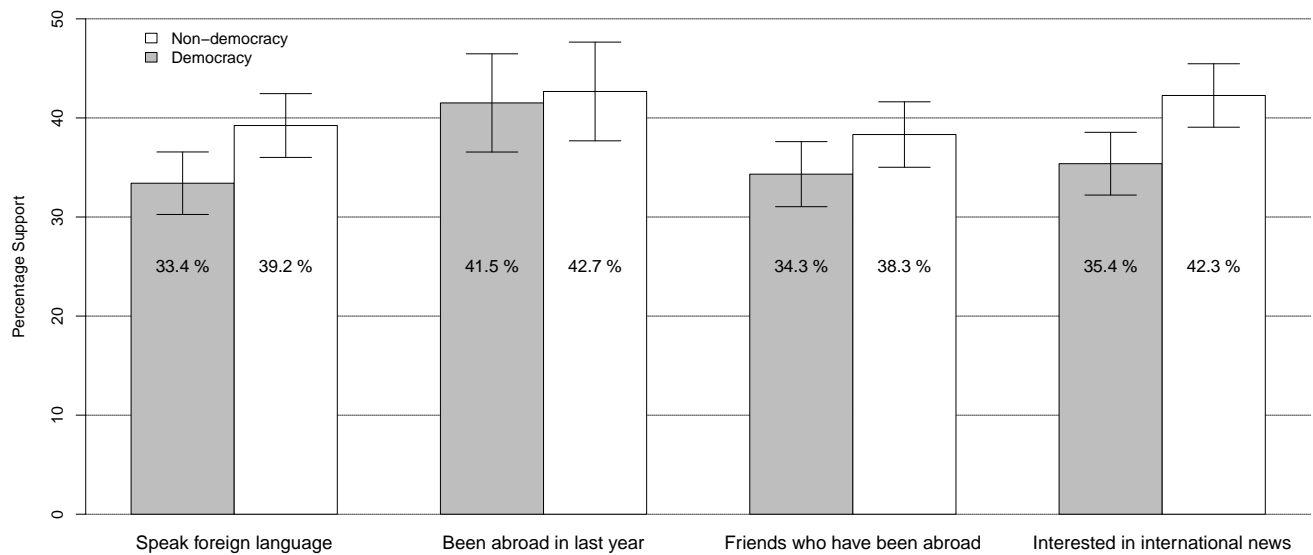
Figure 2: Univariate balance on pre-treatment covariates



5 Treatment effects among those with a western conception of democracy

As discussed in the paper, if Chinese citizens have a very different understanding of what constitutes a democracy than western citizens, and that this is driving the results we find, we would expect that Chinese citizens more likely to have a western conception of democracy should experience larger treatment effects than Chinese citizens on average. We examine treatment effects among four subgroups likely to have more exposure to the western world, and thus more likely to have a western conception of democracy: those who speak a foreign language, have recently traveled outside China, those who know someone who has lived or worked outside China, and those who have an interest in international news. As shown in Figure 3, we find similar or smaller treatment effects among these groups. This suggests that differences in conceptions of the meaning of democracy are not driving the findings.

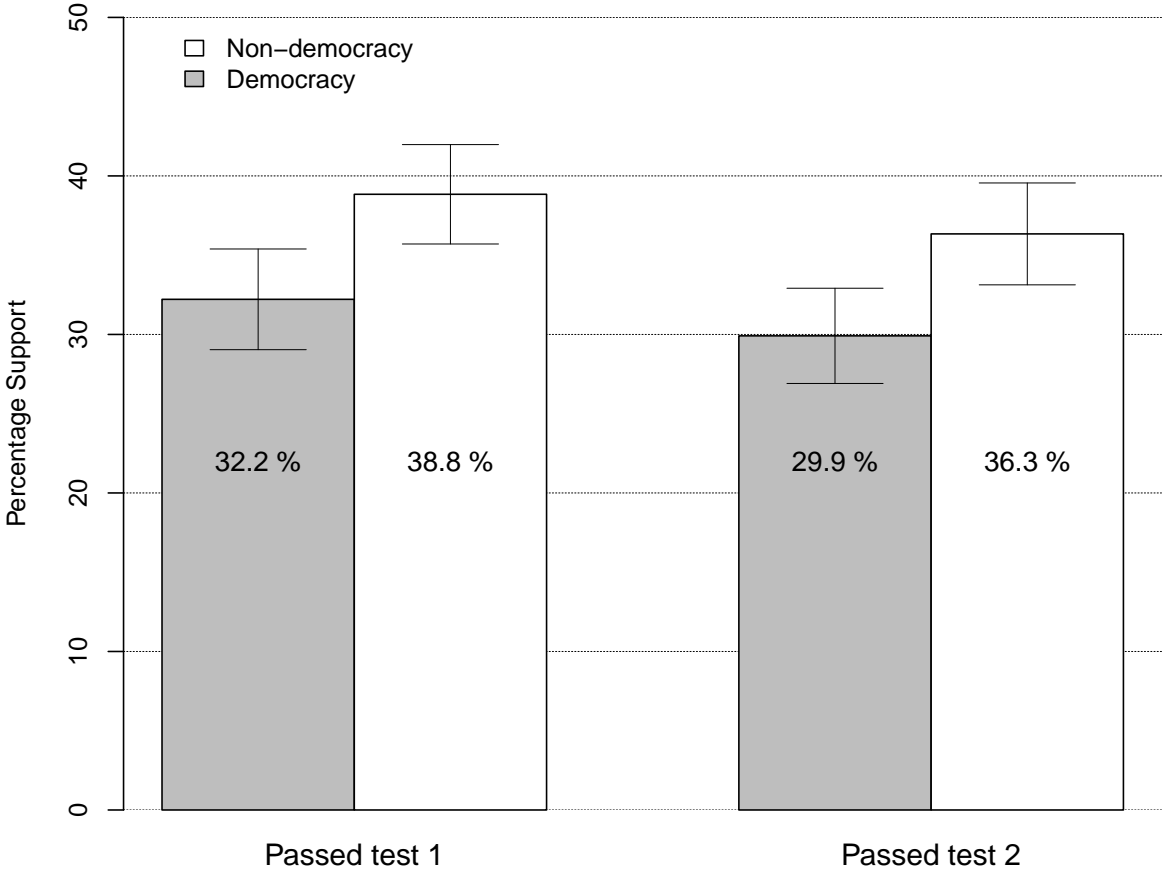
Figure 3: Treatment effect among subgroups likely to have a more western conception of democracy



6 Treatment effects by understanding of scenario

Figure 4 shows the treatment effects when the sample is restricted only to those respondents who answered two questions to assess their understanding of the scenario. The first test asked respondents whether the scenario was about a democratic country, a non-democratic country, or neither. The treatment effect among respondents who gave the correct response was 6.7 percentage points. The second test asked respondents whether the scenario was about Iran, North Korea, or not about a specific country. The treatment effect among those respondents who correctly said that the scenario was not about a specific country was 6.4 percentage points. These treatment effects are similar to those in the sample at large, and suggests the findings are not driven by respondents with an inaccurate understanding of the scenario.

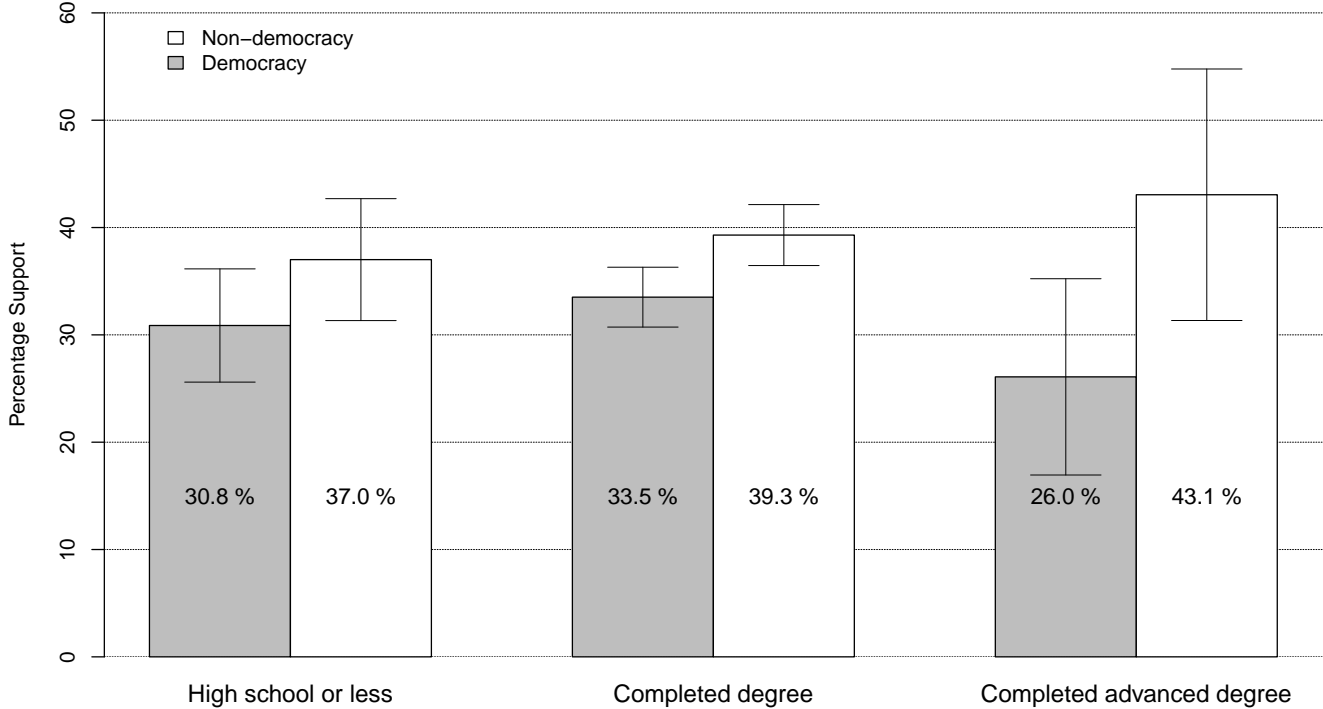
Figure 4: Treatment effect among those who fully understood the scenario



7 Treatment effects by education level

Figure 5 shows the treatment effects by the level of education of the respondents. The core finding of a reluctance to attack a democracy exists across education levels, although those with advanced degrees display a larger treatment effect than those with lower levels of education (although the confidence intervals are also large, given the relatively small proportion of the sample with advanced degrees).

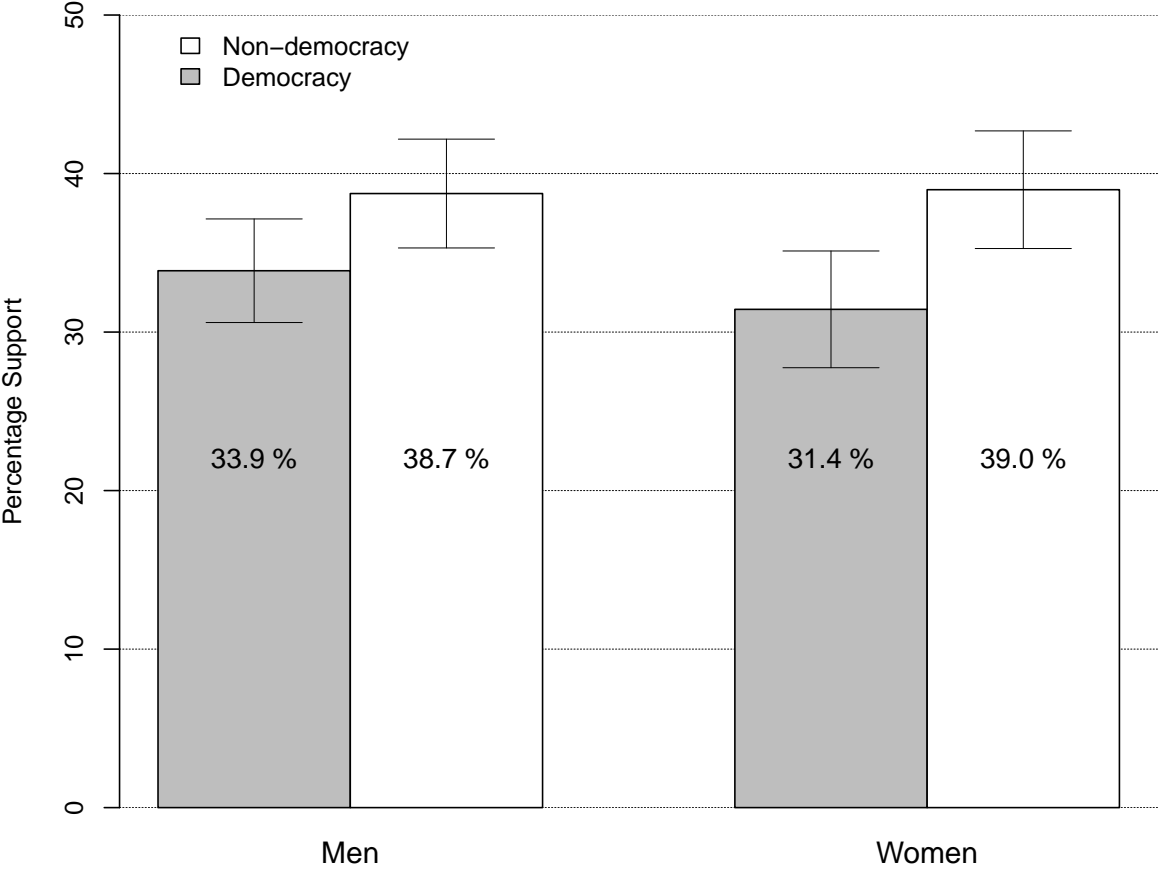
Figure 5: Treatment effect by education level



8 Treatment effects by gender

Figure 6 shows the treatment effects by gender. Among men the treatment effect is 4.9 percentage points and among women the treatment effect is 7.5 percentage points. As discussed in the paper, women thus display a somewhat higher treatment effect than men.

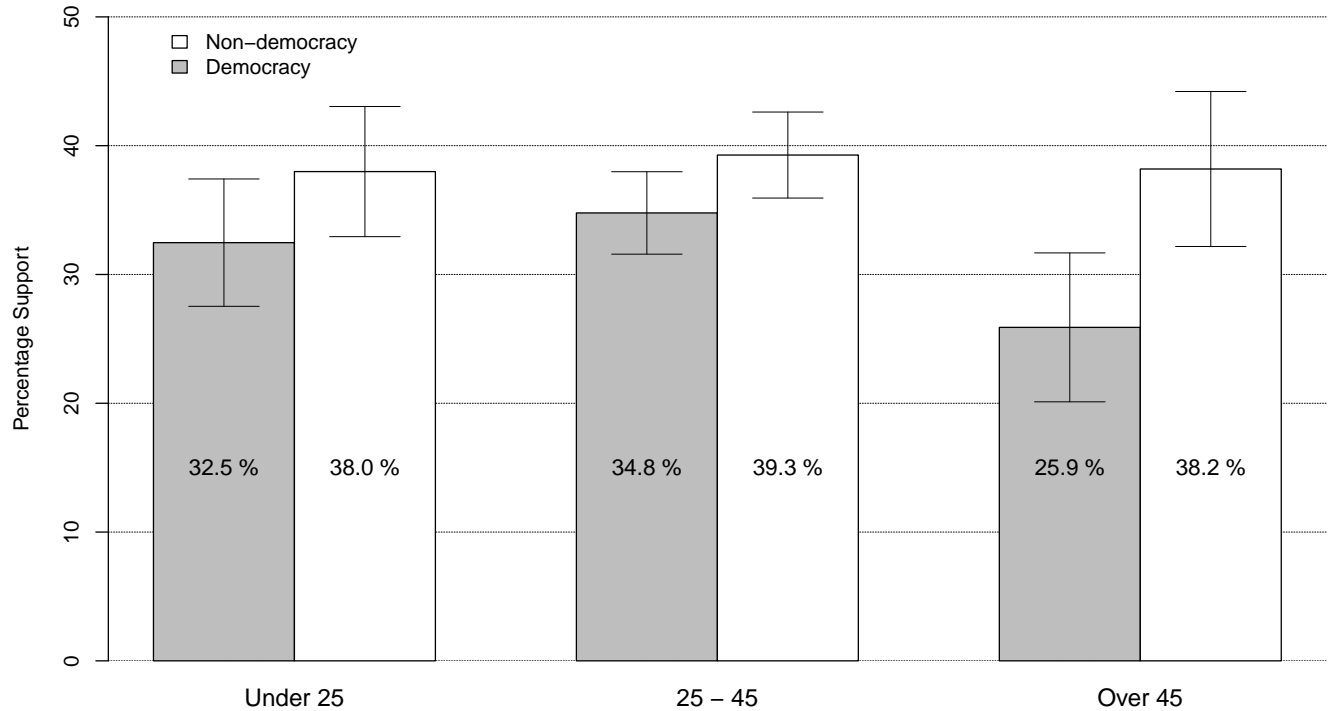
Figure 6: Treatment effect by gender



9 Treatment effects by age

Figure 7 shows the treatment effects by age. The core finding exists across age groups, although it is somewhat larger among older respondents. Among those under the age of 25, the treatment effect is 5.5 percentage points; among those between 25 and 45, the treatment effect is 4.5 percentage points, and among those over 45, the treatment effect is 12.3 percentage points.

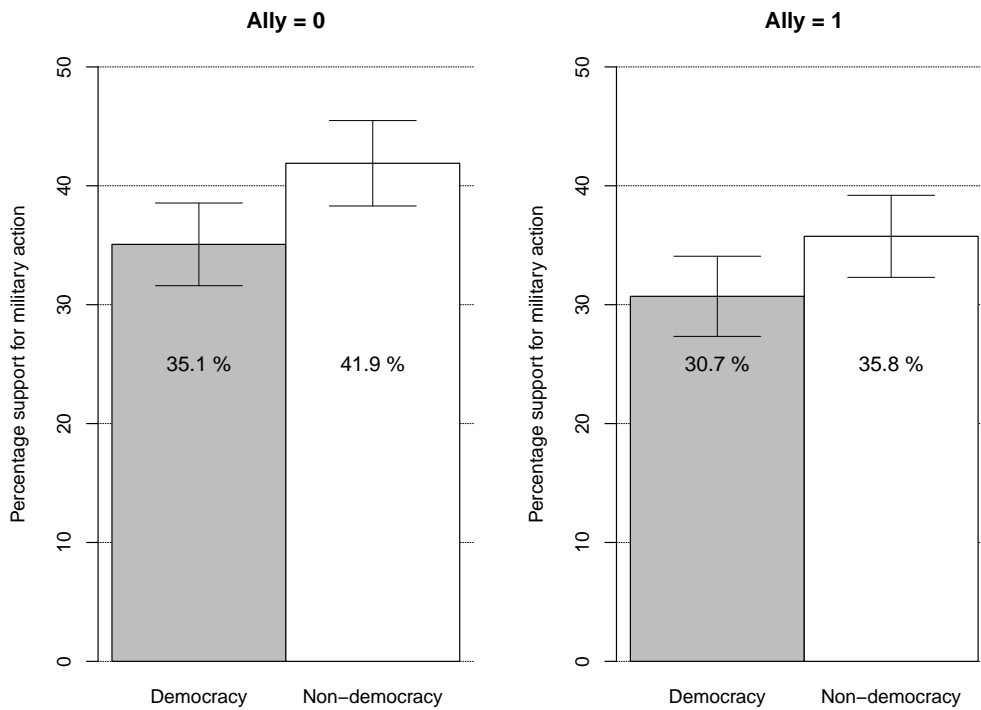
Figure 7: Treatment effect by age



10 Treatment effects of democracy by alliance treatment

If democracy were proxying for some other variable such as alliance status, we would expect the treatment effect of democracy to be different when other treatments that may be correlated with democracy are explicitly manipulated in the scenario. Similarly, because China has relatively few formal allies, there is a potential concern that respondents think of North Korea if they are told the country is one which has an alliance with China (despite the survey stating that the scenario is set in the future and is hypothetical). To address this concern, Figure 8 shows the treatment effects of democracy when the sample is split by the alliance treatment status. As can be seen, the treatment effect of democracy is similar whether the potential target is an ally of China or not.

Figure 8: Treatment effect of democracy by alliance treatment



11 Treatment effects of democracy by trade treatment

If democracy were proxying for some other variable such as alliance status, we would expect the treatment effect of democracy to be different when other treatments that may be correlated with democracy are explicitly manipulated in the scenario. Similarly, respondents may think of particular democracies or non-democracies when told that China trades significantly with them (for example, Australia or North Korea). To address this concern, Figure 9 shows the treatment effects of democracy when the sample is split by the trade treatment status. As can be seen, the treatment effect of democracy is similar whether the potential target is a trading partner of China or not.

Figure 9: Treatment effect of democracy by trade treatment

